

what I don't see can't hurt me:
the aesthetics of resistance

curated by alysse stepanian
july 7-2011
7-9pm
a kamikaze exhibition

Wilfried Agricola de Cologne . video
Kathleen Quillian . video
Matthew Shain . photographs
Alysse Stepanian . paintings
Sarah Stolar . video

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what I don't see can't hurt me: the aesthetics of resistance

LIST OF WORKS

Wilfried Agricola de Cologne (video)

One Day on Mars

PAL, 2007, running time 8:00

Kathleen Quillian (video)

Wasteland

NTSC, 2010, running time 3:05

Matthew Shain (photographs)

1. *Untitled (Blindfolded Horse)*, 2010, archival inkjet print, 18"x26"

2. *16 Dogs Gone*, 2011, archival inkjet print, 32"x46"

3. *16 Gun Dogs*, 2011, archival inkjet print, 13"x19"

4. *Lazy Eye (Kirk)*, 2011, archival inkjet print, 24"x30"

5. *Untitled (White Dog)*, 2011, archival inkjet print, 20"x24.5"

Alysse Stepanian (paintings)

1. *Of Those Who Called Red*, 2008, oil on panel, 24"x24"

2. *What About Winter?*, 2011, oil on panel, 24"x24"

3. *Over And Over And Over...*, 2011, oil on panel, 24"x24"

4. *In This Together*, 2011, oil on panel, 24"x24"

Sarah Stolar (video)

Farm

NTSC, 2006-2007, running time 1:44

July 7, 2011
curator's statement

what I don't see can't hurt me: the aesthetics of resistance

by Alysse Stepanian

The power of art to effect social change has been debated over the years. As we proceed further into the 21st Century, a new level of comfort seems to have settled with widespread acceptance and understanding of once esoteric, conceptual and formally driven work. Emboldened by this, artists choose to freely cross boundaries of genre, style and medium, using whatever is necessary to communicate their message. The five artists being presented here are driven by their desire to transform human consciousness. The work ranges from the abstract and conceptual to figurative narration. The do-it-yourself format of this one night Kamikaze exhibit, instigated by HK Zamani, seems appropriate for the nature of this show, in which artists take on active social roles.

In his performative quasi-documentary experimental video, *One Day On Mars*, shot during his trip to Israel and Palestine, Wilfried Agricola de Cologne juxtaposes disturbing clips of soldier and civilian clashes against painful images of captive birds used for entertainment. The legs of these birds are chained to a board, in the middle of a maze of protruding nails. Periodically, we see Agricola de Cologne himself wrapping his own head and nude figure with bandages, as if to nurse the wounds that witnessing these scenes have scratched into his being.

Kathleen Quillian's animation video, *Wasteland*, reveals the journey of our diseased food and the unconscionable and reckless abuse that pervades the food industry. Using simple yet meticulously thought out images, in a linear, graphically descriptive narrative, Quillian attempts to convince the viewer to consider change.

In the dream-like animation video, *Farm*, Sarah Stolar accesses and stimulates the emotions and memories of the viewer. She depicts a farmhouse amidst a bucolic farm as seen through the metal bars of a barn, where lost and forgotten animals once lived.

Matthew Shain's conceptual approach to photography aims at the psychological dynamics that erupt when culture and nature interact. Images from hunting magazines are re-contextualized. A white dog is posed against a white background as if in a high fashion magazine - nature is reduced to the aesthetics of culture. In some ways the "eye" in Shain's *Lazy Eye (Kirk)* may remind one of *Mona Lisa's* enigmatic smile. Society and pop culture routinely adopt challenging iconic artworks, regurgitating them in the form of kitsch. In this rush for appropriation, meaning is ignored, overlooked and lost. Shain uses his subjects as signs that entice the viewer into investigating multiple layers of meaning.

In my recent paintings, I make use of formal and abstract aesthetics to allude to the painful realities of factory farming. Beneath the visual intensity of these works, lies the darkness that inspired their creation. It is a subject most people would rather ignore but cannot easily dismiss.

Awareness of the appalling conditions we have created for both domesticated and wild animals in our "civilized" world is growing at an accelerated pace. Each artist presented in this show makes direct or indirect references to the mistreatment of animals living in captivity. There is recognition that our silence reaffirms the status quo, and these artists understand the necessity of representing the plight of the wronged and underrepresented. Turning a blind eye to evil is not an option.

what I don't see can't hurt me...

PØST, Los Angeles

WILFRIED AGRICOLA DE COLOGNE (Cologne, Germany)

One Day on Mars

PAL video, 2007, running time 8:00

ABOUT THE WORK

Director, Producer, Editor, Script, Sound, Music: Agricola de Cologne

A human being is obliged to spend at least one day in his lifetime on Mars. Mars the red desert planet, Mars the god of war. Mars can be anywhere, any place which is identified with the inhuman, violence, hate, rage, revenge and despair. The original film material was recorded in Palestine & Israel.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Agricola de Cologne is an artist brand and media art activist by the same name, launched on 1 January 2000

- multidisciplinary media artist, director of experimental shortfilms & videos, new media curator and cultural designer
- founder & director of artvideoKOELN - the curatorial initiative "art & moving images" (2010)
- founder and director of CologneOFF - Cologne International Videoart Festival (2006)
- founder and director [NewMediaArtProjectNetwork]:llcologne - the experimental platform for art and New Media (2000), a global network on different virtual and physical levels.

Besides the wide range of curatorial contexts in virtual and physical space, Agricola initiates himself in frameworks such as JavaMuseum (2001), NewMediaFest (2002), Violence Online Festival (2003), SoundLAB & VideoChannel (2004), CologneOFF (2006), and netEX (2007). Agricola de Cologne is also co-curator and co-organizer of numerous media art events, festivals and exhibitions around the globe, as well as a jury member in diverse festivals.

Since 2000, he has been participating as a media and video artist in biennials such as ISEA Nagoya (2002), Venice Biennale 2003, Biennale of New Media Art Merida/Mexico 2003, Biennale of Electronic Arts Perth/Australia (2004), Biennale de Montreal (2004), Biennale of Video & New Media Santiago de Chile (2005), ISEA Singapore 2008, and in more than 500 festivals and media art exhibitions in New York, Chicago, London, Paris, Marseille, Madrid, Barcelona, Oslo, Seoul, Bangkok, New Delhi, Basel, Vienna, Linz (Ars Electronica), Graz, Kiev, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Riga, Tallinn, Tokyo, Rome, Venice, Milan, Torino, Karlsruhe (ZKM), Berlin, Nuremberg and many other places.

His most recent media art context, i.e. "CologneOFF 2011 - videoart in a global context" is a nomadic festival project touring virtually and physically once around the globe during 2011 and 2012.

Agricola de Cologne's media art works and videos have received numerous prizes and awards.

Agricola de Cologne: <http://www.agricola-de-cologne.de>

Agricola de Cologne Moving Picture Collection: <http://movingpictures.agricola-de-cologne.de>

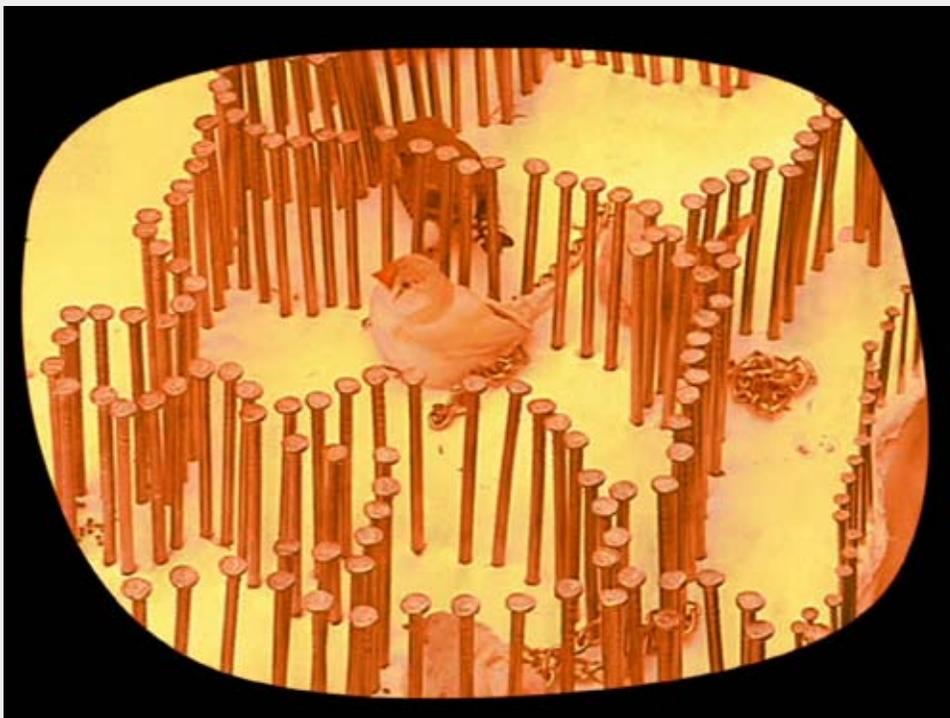
artvideoKOELN: <http://video.mediaartcologne.org>

Cologne International Videoart Festival: <http://coff.newmediafest.org>

[NewMediaArtProjectNetwork]:llcologne: <http://www.nmartproject.net>

WILFRIED AGRICOLA DE COLOGNE (continued...)

stills from the video



<i>what I don't see can't hurt me...</i>	
PØST, Los Angeles	

KATHLEEN QUILLIAN (Oakland, California)

Wasteland

NTSC video, 2010, running time 3:05

ABOUT THE WORK

Written, directed and produced by Kathleen Quillian

Through stop-motion animation, "Wasteland" follows the path of the industrial food system from field to table and back and shows how the industry operates at the expense of the health of the society it was designed to feed.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Kathleen Quillian received her MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2003. She makes collaborative multi-media installations and performances with Gilbert Guerrero as well as individual work in single-channel video and animation. Among the places her work has been exhibited include the San Jose Museum of Art, Pacific Film Archives, International Film Festival Rotterdam, SITE Santa Fe, Southern Exposure, The Aurora Picture Show and Artists' Television Access.

<http://www.dprojx.org/about/kathleen>

KATHLEEN QUILLIAN (continued...)

stills from the video



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MATTHEW SHAIN (Los Angeles, California)

photographs

1. *Untitled (Blindfolded Horse)*, 2010, archival inkjet print, 18"x26"
2. *16 Dogs Gone*, 2011, archival inkjet print, 32"x46"
3. *16 Gun Dogs*, 2011, archival inkjet print, 13"x19"
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5. *Untitled (White Dog)*, 2011, archival inkjet print, 20"x24.5"

ABOUT THE WORK

A dog finds a bird and flushes it out of the brush. A moment later the bird lies prone on the ground and is just as quickly scooped up into the dog's mouth, carried off and presented eagerly, with pride, and even almost salaciously. Is that satiated look in the dog's eye a sign of her wildness or an indication of her domestication, an eagerness to please her master? At what point in the hunt, if any, is there a connection to the wild, or is it all an enactment of culture?

Pointing and presentation are reciprocal actions. What we try to show the world boomerangs back to us with revelations about our nature, about the constructs of the world and how we read what we see. But if the narrative of the wild were truly embraced as a cultural construct then the adventurer, the tamer of lesser species, the master of his domain would go from hero to idiot in the blink of an eye. So, for all that is seeable, we have blind spots. They keep our actions justifiable and our stories believable so that we may eagerly point to and present what we find as some original creation, a result of our direct contact with the natural, wild world.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Matthew Shain was born in 1978 in San Francisco. He earned a BS in Journalism/Art-Direction in 2000 from the University of Colorado, and then a BFA in Photography in 2005 from the California College of the Arts.

Matthew has worked collaboratively and individually on a variety of projects. He has exhibited in San Francisco, Oakland, Riverside and in Chicago, IL. Currently, Matthew is pursuing his MFA at UC Riverside.

MATTHEW SHAIN (continued...)

photographs



Untitled (White Dog), 2011, archival inkjet print, 20"x24.5"



16 Gun Dogs, 2011, archival inkjet print, 13"x19"

<i>what I don't see can't hurt me...</i>	
PØST, Los Angeles	

ALYSSE STEPANIAN (Los Angeles, CA)

paintings

1. *Of Those Who Called Red*, 2008, oil on panel, 24" x24"
2. *What About Winter?*, 2011, oil on panel, 24" x24"
3. *Over And Over And Over...*, 2011, oil on panel, 24" x24"
4. *In This Together*, 2011, oil on panel, 24" x24"

ABOUT THE WORK

"These works are part of an ongoing series informed by the horrific acts that take place in factory farming. They are visceral expressions that carry the burden of the anger and sadness I feel about the mistreatment and oppression of animals raised in captivity for human consumption. My hope is that by making them visually enticing, I will capture the attention of those who have not given the subject the consideration it deserves."

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Stepanian is a cross-disciplinary and video artist, and the creator and curator of Manipulated Image video screenings based in the US. Her recent curation of videos by 9 Iranian artists for Agricola de Cologne's Cologne OFF 2011, has made stops at the Arad Art Museum in Romania, Szczecin/Poland, and Galleria Rajatilla in Tampere/Finland.

Stepanian's paintings, performances, and installations have been presented internationally in over 150 shows. Most recent screenings of her videos include: Anthology Film Archives, New York City; Contemporary Museum in Baltimore, Maryland; Vasteras Konstmuseum, Sweden; Gaza International Festival For Video Art; Teatro Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Arte Cubano in Havana. Beijing's City Weekend Magazine listed *Don't be afraid, be ready*, her collaborative 2006 installation with Philip Mantione in China, as number one of the top 5 exhibits.

<http://alyssestepanian.com>

<http://www.box1035.com>

<http://manipulatedimage.com>

what I don't see can't hurt me...

PØST, Los Angeles

ALYSSE STEPANIAN (continued...)

paintings



Of Those Who Called Red, 2008, oil on panel, 24"x24"

<i>what I don't see can't hurt me...</i>	
PØST, Los Angeles	

SARAH STOLAR (San Francisco Bay Area, California)

Farm

NTSC video, 2006-2007, running time 1:44

ABOUT THE WORK

Farm is part of the multi-channel video installation Dollhouse Series, an ongoing sculptural and video documentation of private and public spaces that have altered my life. The dollhouse format acts a metaphor for childhood fantasies, dreams, and nightmares; a tiny toy world that is created and manipulated during the earliest years of life. Built from wood covered in drawings, found objects, studio "junk", and various reworked mechanical objects, much of the exterior is left rough, with wires exposed and so forth, while the interiors are delicate and highly worked. This is a response to the chaotic nature of the outside world as opposed to the safety of private spaces. However, in this work, the safety of the private space is altered by the reality of the environment - a slaughterhouse.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

"I am a painter, multi-media, and performance artist. Everything about my artistic process stems from drawing, a raw medium that generates conscious and subconscious ideas. All of my work is autobiographical; however, it may or may not be representational. I float in between illustration and abstraction depending on the concept of the piece and the material that I am using. A distinct visual language is prevalent in all of the work and these images reappear in various forms. For example, a key may appear in a painting two-dimensionally, in a sculpture physically, and in an installation as an auditory experience. In essence, through my process, I set out to exhaust the images in every possible way, from every perception. Other images in this language include doors, gates, towers, eyes, circles, stars, rain (or tears), waves, and smoke."

Sarah Stolar received her MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2003. She has completed residencies at the Instituto Superior de Arte in Havana, Cuba; the Studio Art Centers International in Florence, Italy; and the Contemporary Artists Center in North Adams, Massachusetts. Most recently, Sarah's large-scale video installation "Hospital" was exhibited at Currents 2011 in Santa Fe New Mexico. Her paintings are represented by the Bohemian Gallery (Los Angeles, Overland Park, Kansas, and Montevideo, Uruguay) with recent exhibits at the FADA Los Angeles Art Fair and the Red Dot Art Fair in New York City. Sarah is also a performer and dancer working primarily in fire and circus (non-animal) arts. In addition, she is the costume designer for Love Art Lab (Annie Sprinkle and Beth Stephens), most recently designing for and performing with them in the 53rd Annual Venice Biennale

<http://www.sarahstolar.com>

what I don't see can't hurt me....

PØST, Los Angeles

SARAH STOLAR (continued...)

still from the video



July 2011 Kamikaze Exhibits

"In the month of July, PØST will present thirty-one different exhibits. The July 2011 Kamikaze exhibits continue in the same tradition of thirty or thirty-one Kamikaze exhibits that were presented at PØST in September of 2009, July 2010 and January of 2011. Difficult times invite difficult gestures. By design, these exhibits remain close to art and distant from the other stuff. A book will be produced for each Kamikaze month."

July 2011 Kamikaze Artist-curators:

Daniel Aksten, Young An, Dawn Arrowsmith, Kireilyn Barber, Nathan Bockelman, Kathrin Burmester, Carolyn Castaño, Angel Chen, Alice Clements, Marjan Hormozi, Bettina Hubby, Susan Joseph, Alice Könitz, Kristi Lippire, Jay Lizo, Farrah Karapetian, Karen Lofgren, Barry Markowitz, Sandeep Mukherjee, Chris Oliveria, Jim Ovelmen, Dylan Palmer, Joan Perlman, Mary Anna Pomonis, Danny Shain, Alysse Stepanian, Coleen Sterritt, Steven Lee Stinnett, Devon Tsuno, Denver Tuttle, HK Zamani.

Special thanks to HK Zamani at PØST and all the participating artists

Project site and images from the opening night: http://alyssestepanian.com/POST_7_7_11.html

Download this catalogue: http://alyssestepanian.com/POST_7_7_11_catalog.pdf

Contact Alysse Stepanian: info@alyssestepanian.com

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Cover Image: *One Day on Mars* by Wilfried Agricola de Cologne: PAL video, 2007, running time 8:00